



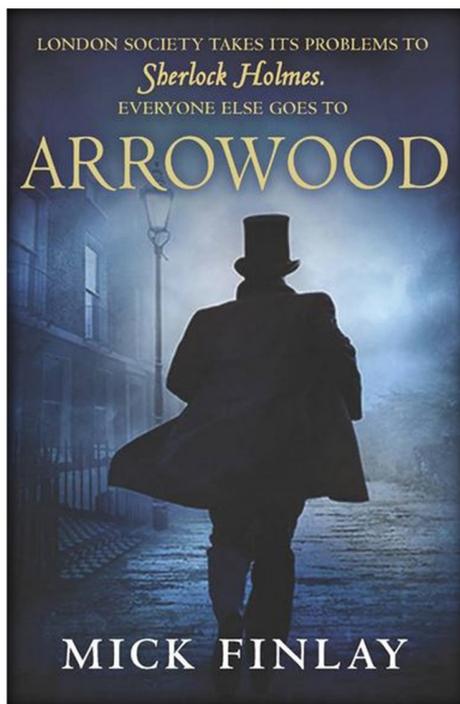
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LoveReading Reader reviews of **Arrowood** by Mick Finley

Below are the complete reviews, written by LoveReading members.



Lisa Redmond

'Arrowood' is the debut novel from Mick Finley. It's set in South London in 1895 and it features a consulting detective, but this is not Sherlock Holmes. The tagline for this story is "London Society takes their problems to Sherlock Holmes everyone else goes to Arrowood." Arrowood is fat, balding, often drunk. He's a terrible brother an even worse employer and friend and he hates Sherlock Holmes with a burning passion. The police generally aren't interested in his help so he has to use unconventional or even illegal methods to find information but somehow he and his partner Barnett seem to get the job done. When a young French woman seeks their

help in locating her missing brother Barnett and Arrowood soon find themselves embroiled in a mystery that includes a dangerous criminal gang, Irish American revolutionaries and corruption at the highest levels of power.

The writing is furious and fast paced, Finley knows his way around Victorian London and like Arrowood he knows people; from the drunks at the bar to the kind hearted women like Arrowood's sister who nurse the sick and the destitute, to the servants quarters and flop houses this is a Victorian London that's richly peopled and beautifully drawn. If you a fan of Sarah Pinborough's 'Mayhem' or if love the camaraderie of Frey and McGray in Oscar de Muriel's books then 'Arrowood' is for you. If you are fan of 'Sherlock Holmes' you will probably love it all the more. All the familiar Sherlockian tropes are there but they are subtle and carefully used and the whole story is also shaded with political ideas and a darker and grittier tone than Conan Doyle ever used. ***This is a fantastic start to what I hope will be a longer series.***

Phyllippa Smithson

Set in 1895 London, 'Arrowood' is completely different from the usual thriller – not least the fact the maestro himself Sherlock Holmes, it seems has competition.

Arrowood believes himself to be a better private investigator than his famous competitor, Sherlock Holmes. Along with this overwhelming belief, he is vain, arrogant, passionate to the point of alienating those he really cannot afford to alienate if he wants information or to stay alive - and he is wonderful! He views Holmes as simply lucky when solving the crimes he solves and questions his vaguely scientific way of solving a case to be dubious at best. Arrowood is also confident those crimes his renowned competitor does not solve are because they are not reported adding to his reputation of being infallible. It is Arrowood's opinion that the only way to solve a crime is to look at the psychology of those involved, whether it is the victims, those associated with the victim, those under investigation for the crime and even those investigating it.

*Needless to say, whilst he is evidently skilled in his craft, he is nothing but for the fact that his side kick and somewhat put upon assistant Barnett, is there in times of need. Such times include taking a beating by attackers, calming those angered by Arrowood's passion (often interpreted by blind rudeness) and even being seen as the tea-boy and generally dogsbody if required. Arrowood also knows Barnett is invaluable. The plot rests on a request from a sister distressed that her brother has disappeared under mysterious and worrying circumstances. This leads the two investigators into all paths of trouble and danger and makes for **a truly superb read.***

Angie Rhodes

London, 1895, Sherlock Holmes is solving crimes with deduction and the help of Dr Watson who writes his "stories" up for The Strand Newspaper, but there is another less known private investigator solving crimes, with a sidekick. His name? William Arrowood, yes he is a little uncouth, has a short temper, likes his food, but he has a heart, he gets the job done, and he helps those who cannot afford Sherlock Holmes. Helping him is Norman Barnett, a likeable chap (who does all the running around, as Mr Arrowood is a little on the plumb side) A killer is on the loose in London, people are afraid to leave their homes, and for those living on the streets nowhere is safe and this is why they need Arrowood and Barnett. No job is too small, too crook to big, hand need to get dirty these are your men.

Loving 'Sherlock Holmes', I was a little apprehensive reading this, but WOW!! no need to fear, it is EXCELLENT, I didn't want it to finish it, It has everything, carriages, mist, fog, grubby pubs, dodgy men, hopeless coppers, and two wonderful characters you will want to meet again!. So if you love Sherlock, trust me, you will love this!!

Kathy Howell

This is a well written book that moves at a good pace with an engaging mystery and likeable characters. When I received this book I opened it to see what it was like...and struggled to put it down!

The story is about William Arrowood and Norman Barnett who act a private investigators in London in 1865. Arrowood despises Sherlock Holmes and, in contrast, his cases involve the lower areas of the capital, and therefore the fact that less money is available. The case they are engaged to look into is linked with an old case of theirs which went badly wrong involving Mr Cream, a gangland villain. They are hired by Miss Cousture but all through the book she is lying to them and they have to pursue the case without incurring the wrath of Mr Cream. The case brings them into conflict with the Police, Irishmen involved in the fight for Home Rule, and members of Parliament. Arrowood tries to set up a meeting with the criminals with the Police in attendance, but the Police don't show up and they are left to fight alone. The background stories are well written and don't detract from the main story line. No one is quite what they seem! The story moves at a good pace and the reader is eager to know what happens next. Although there is a lot of descriptions of injury and very unpleasant deaths, this book is very readable and I am going to check if this author has written any further stories.

Cathy Petersen

A good idea that makes for a pleasant, easy read but for me lacked that extra element to make it a really great crime novel.

I'm afraid I didn't enjoy this as much as I thought I would. I liked the premise, a private detective that picks up the cases Sherlock Holmes doesn't, delving into the seedier side of Victorian London. The plot itself wasn't bad and progressed logically and reasonably well, it just felt lacking overall. The characters I felt needed a little more work, the only well rounded one was the narrator, Barnett

(the Watson equivalent). The rest of the characters worked reasonably well but as with the plot, they just lacked spark. I got irritated by Arrowood himself and just couldn't engage with him as a great detective in the way the reader was supposed to but in fairness that could just be me. The Holmes references didn't really help and there was far too much of him explaining obvious points that the reader could probably have picked up themselves. This is not to say I disliked the book, it was a pleasant and easy read but nothing more than that.

You can follow Cathy in Twitter: @Cerysthepup

Rachael Anderson

A light historical crime novel, which is almost a pastiche of the 'Sherlock Holmes' stories. 'Arrowood' is an historical crime novel set in late Victorian London. It is almost a parody of the stories of 'Sherlock Holmes'. However, 'Arrowood' is a bit more bizarre in parts and there is certainly more violence here than in Arthur Conan Doyle's work. The narrator, Barnett, and Arrowood, the other main character, are given the case of searching for a missing Frenchmen in this story. Both characters are somewhat flat and two dimensional. I cannot feel much empathy or concern for them.

It could easily be considered as a light read. However, the novel tries very hard to comment on late Victorian views and politics. Looking beneath the surface we are shown a sleazy London, rife with sectarian violence and intrigue, as well sexual scandals and prostitution. Overall, I would say it is a bit of a hit or miss book.

Jacki Moorcroft

Superb story of London in 1895. Not your upper-class but the poorer street people, vividly brought to life by Mick Finlay in this tale of a missing person which turns out to be so much more.

Private Investigator Arrowood and his side kick Barnett look after the poorer side of London, Arrowood despises Sherlock Holmes who is the first choice of the rich and famous and undermines his so called instincts relying on his own learnings of reading people to solve his mysteries. He is tasked with the job of finding a young French lady's brother who seems to have disappeared and their journey takes them to the darker side of London, run by the corrupt and policed by crooked cops. Justice is handed out by the Irish mob and not in a nice way! The characters and descriptions of this time are so clear you can practically

taste the fog and smell the stale ale in the air. A brilliant read which would make a great film/TV series.

You can follow Jacki on Twitter: @moorcoftj

Keith Currie

He is not Sherlock Homes; his assistant is not Watson. He is fat and unfit; his helper is tough and uneducated. But for the working poor of south London, Arrowood is their only hope of justice.

In South London in the 1890s, William Arrowood is fat and bald ('a potato of a man'), physically unfit, exhibits problems with alcohol consumption and has a pathological aversion to Sherlock Holmes. For various reasons Arrowood finds himself a private investigator; like Holmes he has an assistant, a working class tough with a sensitive interior called Norman Barnett. Arrowood professedly bases his deductive methods on a study of the minds of those involved in his cases. This meets with very mixed success – it is hard to know whether he is incompetent or lazy – but occasionally he strikes gold.

*This is a riotous rough diamond of a novel. It possesses all the elements of a Holmsian investigation, but very much rooted in the working classes of South London: Irish independence fighters, forced prostitution rackets, corrupt security forces and devious business men all give the narrative a sharply contemporary flavour. **Arrowood's determination, Barnett's decency and drive, the cast of London characters, the presentation of living conditions of the time, the lively dialogue all contribute to an amusing and very entertaining read.** This would appear to be the first in a series involving these characters. I would be very pleased to follow their story.*

Alfred Nobile

Very entertaining book. A historical novel. London society consults Sherlock Holmes the rest go to Arrowood. Arrowood despises Sherlock Holmes. Is this because Holmes gets the publicity that Arrowood lacks. Or because he considers himself the better detective.

*Quality writing that evokes Victorian London, this is complex tale that involves Irish republicans, prostitution and white slavery. What starts as a routine case for Arrowood and Barnett, a missing person, soon becomes more complex as you turn the pages. And you want to turn the pages. **This is a tale I would recommend to anyone who wants to smell old London and likes a***

book with character and evokes the times which it is set in. Thanks to Lovereading for the ARC

Alan Gee

*The hero of this book is a poor man's Sherlock Holmes, in every sense of the words. I did find his jealousy of Holmes and his constant, rather repetitive criticism of the great (fictional) detective and his methods a little wearing after a while. It is, though, **a good story, involving murder, London gangsters, Irish terrorists and a cache of stolen British Army rifles,** good enough that I had little difficulty in reading it through to the end. I can't say in all honesty, however, that I'll be rushing to read another Arrowood and Barnett story any time soon.*

Caye Gould

This book is set at the end of the 19th century at the time when Jack the Ripper is terrorising the inhabitants of London. The beginning of the book starts with the introduction of the two main characters - an East End equivalent to Messrs. Holmes and Watson. The plot is centred away from the plush parts of London and deals with the darker side of the times. Lots of characters but I felt that they had been added to fill out the storyline.

A struggle at times to get into the story for any period of reading time - Sorry.

Emily Curnow

*This novel cleverly combines the stories of Sherlock Holmes with a less famous couple of private detectives. Based in 1895, London, we follow Arrowood and his associate Barnett in their crime solving. Unlike Sherlock Holmes these two characters are full of flaws which makes them all the more interesting. **The novel twists and turns throughout until a satisfactory conclusion is realised.** The novel gives a great insight into the gritty realities of Victorian London. **Very much enjoyed.***

Emily

This novel contained everything a 'Sherlock Holmes' inspired story should; a dark criminal underworld and grimy London alleyways,

not to mention a cantankerous private detective and his loyal sidekick. 3/5

Sadly in my opinion the story itself wasn't the strongest and at times I did find myself losing interest. However, I made it through the very end which is left quite open so I presume the author is planning a sequel. As someone who has read and enjoyed so many of the Sherlock Holmes stories, perhaps I am just being overly critical. This is by no means a badly written story, it just didn't wholly grab my attention.

J Hutchinson

This is far more than just a Victorian murder mystery and I would love to read more of their cases.

Told from the point of view from Arrowood's assistant. The author Mick Finlay does a really great job of describing this dank, dangerous, and decidedly underclass world of London in 1895.

The book follows the world and case of a private detective William Arrowood and his trusty sidekick, Norman Barnett. It has the elements of a Sherlock Holmes investigation, (though that's not a comparison Arrowood would appreciate) but Arrowood helps the people who can't pay for the likes of Sherlock Holmes.

The book is very much rooted in the working classes of South London including figures like Irish independence fighters, devious business men, prostitution rackets and corrupt forces.

An amusing and very entertaining read that involves the case of a missing Frenchman that evolves into something a lot more dangerous. I did like how the mystery was wrapped up. Arrowood has a different technique to Sherlock. He concentrates on people's body language and responses and less on physical clues like Sherlock Holmes methods.

Arrowood and Barnett's friendship appeared genuine and allowed the characters to bounce off each other and Barnett helps calm Arrowoods temper and Arrowood's bossy sister was very entertaining.

Follow J Hutchinson on Twitter: @sometweet7